

Office for Foreign Affairs, 20th October, 1785

OFFICE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 20th OCTOBER, 1785.

The Secretary of the United States for the **DEPARTMENT** of **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**, to whom was referred his Letter of 13th instant, to his Excellency the **PRESIDENT**, and one from Chevalier Jones, to him of 6th August last, with a Copy of a Letter, from Mr. Soulanges, to the Judges and Consuls at Nantes, informing that the Algerines had declared war against the United States: And also a Motion of the Honorable Mr. Pinckney, of 17th October instant—Reports,

THAT this declaration of war being unprovoked, and made solely with design to acquire plunder, it would not, in the opinion of your secretary, become the United States, to answer it by overtures for peace, or offers of tribute.

That duplicates of the dispatches relative to treaties with the Barbary States, carried by captain Lamb, who it seems had not arrived when doctor Franklin left France, should be forthwith sent to our ministers, with instructions to proceed with the other states, but to take no notice of Algiers.

That both the honor and interest of the United States demand, that decided and vigorous measures be taken for protecting the American trade, and meeting these predatory enemies in a proper manner.

That it should be recommended to the American merchants who traffic to Spain, Portugal, the Mediterranean, and to the Madeiras and Canaries, to employ none but vessels well armed and maned; and as the expence of complying with this recommendation, would exceed the usual profits of their voyages, your secretary thinks it should be

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RESOLVED, That every American built ship, capable of carrying twenty guns or more, which any American merchant may desire to send to those parts for trade, shall be supplied by the United States with military stores, and with money to pay the men necessary to man her—And that an ordinance directing the manner in which this resolution shall be executed, be immediately prepared.

That in the opinion of your secretary, five forty gun ships should be forthwith built and put under the direction of a brave experienced commodore, for the purpose of cruising in those seas, during the seasons proper for it.

That the board of admiralty should be organized and put in condition to execute its functions; and that in his opinion, one good commissioner would be more useful and responsible than any greater number.

That a requisition should be made to the states for the supplies necessary for the purposes aforesaid.

That a minister or envoy should be sent to Portugal, and instructed among other things, to negotiate for such an alliance, as may provide for a co-operation of forces and mutual defence against the common enemy, and restrain both nations from making a separate peace. That to favor this design, and on condition of their acceding to such proposals, it would be well to agree that no Portugal productions should be imported in the United States, nor any American productions imported into Portugal ports, except in the vessels of Portugal, or the United States. Such a restriction would make it the interest, and consequently the wish of other commercial nations, rather to see the war terminated than continued. Were it not for the stipulations with France, Sweden, &c. whereby they are to be treated like the *most favored nations*, your secretary thinks that it would be politic, to prohibit all nations *at peace with Algiers*, from bringing any thing to *this country*, which was not produced in *their own*; and also from carrying any thing from hence, except on their own account, and directly to their own ports. As arguments may be drawn from these

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stipulations against such a prohibition, it might occasion discontent and complaint; but he nevertheless thinks it merits enquiry, whether the condition of *war against Algiers*, would not be a good consideration to ground it upon; and whether, as the prohibition would end with the war, it ought to be considered as a violation of those stipulations.

Your secretary takes the liberty of observing, that he has calculated the foregoing report, on a presumption that the United States extend their views and wishes to naval strength and maritime importance; and he thinks the time is come for the final and decided determination of this question, viz. Whether it would be more wise in the United States to withdraw their attention from the sea, and permit foreigners to fetch and carry for them, or to persevere in concerting and pursuing such measures as may conduce to render them a maritime power? It is only in the latter case, that this report will deserve any attention.

As to the motion referred to your secretary, he thinks the measure recommended in it would be expedient, except with respect to Algiers, to whom in his opinion, no overtures should *now* be made. **ALL** which is submitted to the wisdom of Congress. **JOHN JAY.**

OFFICE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 13th OCTOBER, 1785.

SIR,

YOUR excellency will find herewith enclosed, a letter from chevalier Jones, of 6th August, and a copy of a letter (which is the same that is published in the Philadelphia paper of the 11th instant) from monsieur Soulanges, dated 14th July last, to the judges and consuls at Nantes, informing that the Algerines had declared war against the United States.

As their late peace with Spain has rendered their armaments unnecessary against that power, they probably chuse to turn them against us, to prevent their being useless, and in hopes of acquiring considerable booty. This peace, if the public accounts of it are true, gives those pirates just matter of triumph, and in this moment of their exultation, I am inclined to think that an advantageous treaty with them is not to be expected.

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This war does not strike me as a great evil—The more we are treated ill abroad, the more we shall unite and consolidate at home. Besides, as it may become a nursery for seamen, and lay the foundation for a respectable navy, it may eventually prove more beneficial than otherwise. Portugal will doubtless unite with us in it, and that circumstance may dispose that kingdom to extend commercial favours to us farther, than they might consent to do, if uninfluenced by such inducements. For my part I think it may be demonstrated, that while we bend our attention to the sea, every *naval war*, however long, which does not do us essential injury, will do us essential good.

I have the honor to be with great respect and esteem, Your excellency's most obedient and very humble servant, **JOHN JAY.**

His Excellency the President of Congress. **L'ORIENT**, August 6th, 1785.

SIR,

I CAME down here from Paris about a fortnight ago, on the business of the prize-money belonging to the subjects of the United States, who served in the squadron I commanded in Europe.

The inclosed copy of a letter from monsieur Soulanges, the commander at Toulon, to the judges and consuls at Nantes, dated at Toulon the 14th of last month, announcing that the Algerines have declared war against the United States, was communicated to me the 31st ult. and I immediately sent it to Mr. Jefferson at Paris.

The information of monsieur Soulanges is believed here, although there is, as yet, no official account of the Algerine war arrived from court. It is of too serious a nature not to be sent immediately to Congress, and I therefore do not wait for the packet, but send this letter by a merchant ship, that will sail the first fair wind for Philadelphia.

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This event may, I believe, surprize some of our fellow citizens: but, for my part, I am rather surprized that it did not take place sooner. It will produce a good effect, if it united the people of America in measures consistent with their national honor and interest, and rouses them from that ill-judged security which the intoxication of success has produced since the revolution.

The regency of Algier is a powerful state, that can put 200,000 troops into the field; and has a navy consisting (as I have been assured by the commandant here, and by many other gentlemen with whom I have conversed on the subject) of several ships of two batteries, and frigates of 44 guns and downwards. And there is no doubt, but that they will strengthen their navy, and employ its whole force against us; because they have just made peace with Spain.

My best wishes will always attend America, and my pride will be always gratified, when such measures are adopted as will make her respected as a great nation that deserved to be **FREE**.

I am, Sir, with great esteem and respect, Your most obedient and most humble servant,
PAUL JONES.

The Honorable JOHN JAY, Esquire, Minister of Foreign Affairs, &c. New-York.

COPY of the Letter from M. de SOULANGES, to the Judges and Consuls at Nantz.

TOULON, 14th July, 1785.

GENTLEMEN,

COMMODORE de Ligondes, who arrived from Algiers in the frigate Minerva, which he commands, has informed me, on anchoring in this road, that that regency has armed eight vessels, both chebecs and barbes, from 18 to 34 cannon, designed to cruise from Cape

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St. Vincent to the Azores, to capture the Americans, against whom they have declared war.—I give you immediate advice of this, gentlemen, as well on account of the concern you may have as to these vessels, as also that you may give information thereof to the American captains.

The Algerines have another division of 4 vessels, but too small to give uneasiness in our seas. (Signed) **SOULANGES.**

Faithfully translated from the original by **JOHN PINTARD.**

MOTION OF MR. PINCKNEY.

THAT the board of treasury be directed to procure with all possible expedition, a suitable vessel of about tons burthen, and have the same completely equipped for the purpose of going as a flag to the emperor of Morocco, and the regencies of Tunis, Tripoli and Algiers; and that the secretary for foreign affairs be directed, to report the draught of such instructions as it may be necessary to furnish the person with, carrying such flag, to inform the said powers, of Congress's desire to enter into treaties with them, and of the steps they had previously taken to ensure their friendship, and requesting that there might be a suspension of hostilities on their part, until the arrival of the person charged with the negotiation of the said treaties.

Secy for Forn Affairs Algiers Monday 24 Oct. March 29, 1786 Referred to Mr. Johnson Mr. Monroe Mr. Pinckney Mr. Kean Mr. Dane